GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH
ABSTRACT

YAT&C(T)Dept.,-Tourism-Constitution of Andhra Pradesh Eco-Tourism Development Committee - Orders – Issued.

YOUTH ADVANCEMENT, TOURISM AND CULTURE (T) DEPARTMENT

G.O.RT.No. 12 **Dated: 29-01-2021.**

Read:

From the Chief Executive Officer, AP Tourism Authority, Vijayawada.
E-file bearing no. APTA-11023/20/2020-GAD-COT.

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ORDER

In the circumstances explained by the Chief Executive Officer, Andhra Pradesh Tourism Authority, Vijayawada, in the reference read above, and in exercise of the powers conferred under Clause (41) of the Andhra Pradesh Tourism, Culture and Heritage Board Act, 2017 (Andhra Pradesh Act No.4 of 2017). Government after careful examination hereby constitute the Eco-Tourism Development Committee. The Eco-Tourism Development Committee constituted with the following Dignitaries:

(a)	Chief Secretary, Govt. of Andhra Pradesh	Chairperson
(b)	Special Chief Secretary, Tourism, Archaeology, Museums and Culture	Vice Chairperson
(c)	Special Chief Secretary, Environment, Forest, Science & Technology	Vice Chairperson
(d)	Principal Secretary to Government, MA&UD Department	Member
(e)	Principal Secretary Finance to Government	Member
(f)	PCCF (Wildlife)	Member
(g)	PCCF (HoFF)	Member
(h)	Secretary, AP Pollution Control Board	Member
(i)	Member Secretary, AP State Biodiversity Board	Member
(k)	CEO Andhra Pradesh Tourism Committee	Member Convenor
(l)	Vice Chairman & MD, AP Forest Devp. Corporation	Member
(m)	Chief of Wildlife Warden	Member

PTO

2. The Committee shall execute the activities related to Eco Tourism Development as a general strategy in the state through Andhra Pradesh Tourism Authority as mentioned below:

(a) Infrastructure and Facilities at Ecotourism Destinations

(b) Ecotourism Master Plan

(c) Strategy for Forest Areas

(d) Strategy for Protected Areas

(e) Strategy for Eco Sensitive Zone.

(f) Strategy for Wetlands etc..

3. The functions, powers and activities of the committee are annexed to this order.

4. The Chief Executive Officer, A.P. Tourism Authority, Vijayawada shall take necessary action in the mater.

(BY ORDER AND IN THE NAME OF THE GOVERNOR OF ANDHRA PRADESH)

RAJAT BHARGAVA
SPECIAL CHIEF SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT

To
The Chief Executive Officer, AP Tourism Authority, Vijayawada
The Members Concerned through the Chief Executive Officer, AP Tourism Authority, Vijayawada
Copy to:
The PS to Prl.Secretary to C.M,
OSD to Minister (Tourism&Culture),
P.S. to Secretary (T&C), YAT&C Department,
SF/SC.

// FORWARDED :: BY ORDER//

SECTION OFFICER

(Annexure attested)

ANNEXURE

ANDHRA PRADESH ECO-TOURISM DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

(APETDC)

The Eco-Tourism Development Committee constituted in exercise of the powers conferred under clause 41 of the Andhra Pradesh Tourism, Culture and Heritage Board Act, 2017 (Andhra Pradesh Act No.4 of 2017), the Government of Andhra Pradesh makes the following rules:-

Subject to the direction and delegation of the powers by the Committee, Chief Executive Officer-APTA may exercise any power or do any act or thing which may be exercised or done by the Committee.

FUNCTIONS OF THE COMMITTEE

6. The Committee shall derive its mandate from the Andhra Pradesh Tourism Culture and Heritage Board Act, 2017, Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 and other forest acts.

7. The Committee shall carry out activities to promote, educate and conserve the ecology of the state and also development of Eco Tourism activities

8. The Committee shall review the progress of various ecotourism programmes and activities being taken up in the State through centrally sponsored funds and state development funds and make suggestions towards achieving interdepartmental coordination in implementation of these programmes. The Committee shall meet at least once in a three months in this direction.

9. The Committee shall have the power to acquire, hold and dispose properties both movable and immovable derived from the Andhra Pradesh Tourism Culture and Heritage Board Act 2017 through APTA.

10. APTA may enter into contracts and agreements to carry out its objectives as laid out in this policy.

11. It may appoint committees and persons to advise and assist in carrying out its functions effectively.

12. It shall monitor and provide extensive support to capacity building programmes. It shall also be actively involved in conducting impact studies and scientific research.

13. To carry out business activities pertaining to ecotourism and wildlife tourism at all its branches and to set up eco lodges or any other type of eco accommodation to promote and develop ecotourism.

13. To conduct ecotourism activities and provide facilities for camping by building eco lodges and shelters.

(Contd..2)

14. To facilitate the provision of tourist amenities at the eco accommodation for a comfortable stay and to act as the licensed money changer for the purpose of tourism.

15. **To create awareness and Capacity Building.** Capacity of local communities for inclusive development and staff manning the eco tourism sites shall be strengthened on continuous basis to ensure responsible and sustainable tourism. Similarly various out-reach and awareness programmes shall be undertaken for stake holders and partners.

16. To proactively involve and participate in the improvement of the environment and promote the conservation and development of wildlife, forest and jungle areas.

17. To extend consultancy services for all activities relating to ecotourism for the conservation and improvement of wildlife and its environment and to associate and participate in all or any of such activities.

18. The Committee may execute the activities related to Eco Tourism Development in the state through Andhra Pradesh Tourism Authority.

GENERAL STRATEGY

18. Integrated Ecotourism development shall be facilitated through a multi stakeholder network comprising the public sector and private sector organisations along with the local communities.

19. The Committee shall from time to time basis develop policy and issue guidelines for ecotourism activities in the state with public and private sector participation facilitated through a designated body.

20. The Committee shall issue guideline for registration of ecotourism activities and stakeholders to be executed by a designated body.

21. The objectives of the policy shall be achieved through sanction, execution, coordination, monitoring and facilitation of infrastructure projects by the Committee through the executing body.

22. The Committee shall monitor ecotourism and homestay operators through the designated body.

23. The Committee shall frame and approve the parameters and indicators for categorization and rating of ecotourism operators.

24. The Committee shall recommend to the board for incentives to the ecotourism operators as per the tourism policy.

25. The Committee shall undertake surveys, studies, research, training and capacity building in order to develop the capability of the sector and local communities though experienced public and private sector entities.

(Contd..3)

26. The revenue earnings from the ecotourism activities shall be utilized for the welfare and empowerment of the local communities.

27. A comprehensive Ecotourism Master Plan shall be prepared for Protected Areas, Eco sensitive Zones, Wetlands and Eco tourism Centres.

28. **Infrastructure and Facilities at Ecotourism Destinations**

(a) Environment friendly infrastructure may be developed at the ecotourism destinations focusing on socio-economic involvement and minimum negative impact to the natural surroundings. The development of facilities at ecotourism destinations shall be based on environmental education and interpretation, crosscultural exchanges and generation of livelihood opportunities.

(b) A comprehensive list of infrastructural facilities for development or upgradation at the ecotourism destinations shall be prepared according to the Ecotourism Master Plan. Development of eco-friendly accommodation at the destinations shall be based on effective coordination between the public and private sector enterprises and local communities. Promotion of homestays may be taken up in order to facilitate provision of financial benefits to the local communities.

30. **Ecotourism Master Plan.** The Ecotourism Master Plan shall empower and enable the local communities as important stakeholders and beneficiaries of ecotourism activities. The Ecotourism Master Plan shall play a prominent role in ecotourism centric development by facilitating conservation of environmental/ecological resources, assessment of land use pattern, restoration, employment generation and an all-inclusive sustainable development. The Ecotourism Master Plan shall be prepared in coordination with various state government departments, private stakeholders and local communities.

31. Strategy for Forest Areas. The strategy for forest areas shall be based on sustainable forest management, forestry research, afforestation initiatives, ecological conservation and protection along with safeguarding of the interests of local communities who are dependent on forests for their livelihood. Any development in the forest areas shall be in compliance with the provisions of the Indian Forest Act, 1927, Forest (Protection) Act, 1980 and the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006.

32. **Strategy for Protected Areas.** Conservation of the natural ecosystem, awareness and protection of floral and faunal wealth shall be the focus areas in National Parks, Wildlife Sanctuaries, Tiger Reserves, Conservation Reserves, Community Reserves and Marine Protected Areas. Conservation efforts shall be identified and extensively promoted in protected areas. Carrying capacity of the protected areas shall be of paramount importance and strictly adhered to the recommendation and execution of ecotourism activities. The Committee shall determine the carrying capacity and indicate the tourism zone in the Protected Areas (PAs).

(Contd..4)

33. **Strategy for Eco Sensitive Zones** The strategy for Eco sensitive Zones shall be based on holistic development of the area with great focus to ecological and environmental protection. Any development in the eco sensitive zones shall be in compliance with the provisions of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 and the Environment (Protection) Rules, 1986.

34. **Strategy for Wetlands** Strategy for wetlands shall be based on conservation of the fragile ecosystem through involvement and empowerment of the local communities and highlighting the ecotourism potential of the region.

ECO-TOURISM ACTIVITIES

35. **Ecotourism Activities.** Ecotourism activities may be considered to be organized by a qualified operator/ interpreter with an aim to educate and entertain the visitors, empower local communities and encourage environmental conservation shall comprise but not limited to the following activities:

(a) **Nature walks/ Trekking**: Andhra Pradesh is blessed with rich forest cover, scenic valleys, mountains, 2 mighty river systems of Krishna and Godavari, 170 lakes and 50 gardens. The state has secured first rank in forest cover growth in India. Interestingly, there are about 1800 floral species of medicinal plants found in the state. Nature trails may be organized that offer the tourists a chance to explore the wilderness and be informed and educated about the diverse flora and fauna of the region by a guide certified by the designated body. Trekking operators shall ensure that there is no littering in the forest areas. Guides shall also ensure that the tourists don't venture into the wild areas alone and maintain a reasonable distance from the animals.

(b) **Bird watching**: The diverse ecosystem of Andhra Pradesh that attracts birds like The Great Indian Bustard, flamingos, pelicans, herons, ibises, storks, pintails, egrets, migratory ducks, teals, sandpipers and red-chested pod chards is a paradise for ornithologists and bird lovers. Activities like bird watching trails, field trips, and interactive sessions to highlight the avian wealth of the state may be organized in order to emphasize on the need for ecosystem conservation.

(c) **Wildlife safari/ Wildlife viewing**: As the state is blessed with a network of 3 National Parks, 13 Wildlife Sanctuaries, 1 Biosphere Reserve, 1 Tiger Reserve and 1 Elephant Reserve, activities like wildlife safaris, night safaris, wildlife trails and jungle camps may be organized at appropriate locations in a sustainable manner. The safaris shall ensure revenue generation for wildlife habitat conservation and empowerment of local communities. The wildlife guides must have sound knowledge of the state's rich and varied wildlife and emergency rescue methods. Utmost attention needs to be given that nobody lights up fire or smoke inside forested areas. Inflammable materials, fire arms and guns are strictly prohibited in protected areas.

(Contd..5)

(d) **Cycling**: Bicycle tours may be arranged at eco sensitive destinations for a more active, authentic and eco-friendly experience of the local culture, heritage and nature. Members of the local community may be roped in as local ambassadors cum guides for such cycling tours that allow the tourists to enjoy and appreciate the serene landscape.

(e) **Nature camps**: Camping sites may be set up in appropriate locations ensuring minimal carbon footprint. Nature camps may combine recreational activities with outdoor ecofriendly accommodation. Few locations like Tyda, Tada Falls and Sri City in Andhra Pradesh offer attractive avenues for camping and other eco-friendly activities like kayaking and nature trails. Loud music and other noisy activities shall be strictly banned at campsites.

(f) **Ropeways**: The efficient transportation system of hilly terrains may also double up as recreational ride for tourists for enjoying a bird's eye view of the valleys and surrounding areas. Gandikota, Srisailam, Kailasagiri and Simhachalam hills are among the top places in Andhra Pradesh that have great potential to emerge as world class destinations for ropeways.

(g) **Rock climbing and rappelling**: Popular adventure activities like rock climbing and rappelling may be organized in places like Araku Valley, Gandikota Hills, Kondapalli Hills and Seetakonda Hills that have the potential to attract adventure enthusiasts. Such activities may be developed in consultation with safety experts. Youth of the local communities must be provided sufficient training in order to be deployed as climbing instructors and escorts.

(h) **Soft adventure activities**: Activities like rope courses, swinging bridge, rafting, kayaking, boating, sailing, rowing, angling and river crossing that have moderate impact on nature may be promoted, organized and undertaken in eco sensitive zones. These fun oriented activities often attract adventure enthusiasts belonging to different age categories. The river systems of Krishna and Godavari form many inland canals that may be developed as adventure sites for organizing the above-mentioned activities.

(i) **Culinary tours**: The coastal state of Andhra Pradesh is home to spicy delicacies, sweets and savories. Food trails may be organized in order to highlight the mouth watering traditional cuisine of the local communities residing in ecotourism areas. These culinary tours would facilitate enhanced interactions and cross-cultural exchanges between visitors and locals.

(j) **Heritage walks/ Cultural tours**: Heritage walks shall provide a different rural experience to tourists and enhance their understanding about the local culture, customs and ancient traditions of the local communities. Cultural tours may be developed as an important economic resource for conservation of tangible and intangible indigenous cultural heritage, arts and handicrafts. Focus shall be given on improving the well-being of the local communities.

(Contd..6)

(k) **River cruise**: Leisure travel may be facilitated through recreational carriers and cruises along the inland waterways of rivers Godavari and Krishna. Cruises shall focus on creating immersive experiences for the tourists through navigating rivers and exploring the cultural heritage of offshore destinations. Locally available materials shall be used for construction of cruise vessels and cruise ships.

(l) **Eco based accommodation**: Eco friendly accommodation units like jungle lodges, eco resorts and homestays may be developed in the peripheral locations outside the protected areas and forests in the state. Homestays are becoming increasingly popular among tourists and create a perfect platform for cross cultural interactions and experiencing the local way of life. Homestays shall boost the revenue of the local communities and generate livelihood opportunities.

(m)**Interpretation/ Conservation centres**: The unique ecology, biodiversity and cultural richness of the eco sensitive regions shall be effectively exhibited through interpretation centres set up outdoors as well as indoors. The authorities shall incorporate sustainable approaches in building the interpretation/ conservation centres ensuring livelihood opportunities to the locals. The interiors and display materials available within the centres shall convey key information about the local culture, heritage, flora and fauna. The Interpretation Centre shall also focus on building awareness on the conservation measures and interventions. Efforts shall be undertaken to ensure that these centres are managed and operated by local communities, thereby ensuring the local upliftment. Environment Education centres have been set up at various ecotourism destinations in the state that focus on enhancing visitor's knowledge about the local natural and cultural environment. Some of these centres include Thimmammamarrimanu, Horsley Hills, Talakona, Sunnipenta and Kandaleru Deer Park.

(n) **Emergency aid and rescue units**: Adequate arrangements shall be made for handling any kind of emergency. The representatives of the local communities shall be empowered and trained for providing basic first aid in case of any contingency. Well equipped emergency medical units shall be set up at the ecotourism destinations in order to ensure smooth and successful conduct of ecotourism activities.

POWERS OF THE COMMITTEE

36. **Powers of the Committee.** The Committee may exercise one or more of the following powers namely:-

(a) **Agents.**
(i) to act as an agent for the Government of Andhra Pradesh or Government of India or, with the approval of the Board, for any person, body or organisation for the transaction of any business connected with any tourism enterprise;

(Contd..7)

(ii) to appoint such agents as it may deem fit for the purpose of performing its functions;

(iii)to co-operate with or act as agent of, or otherwise act in association with or on behalf of any agency or organization, international or otherwise;

(b) **Tourism Promotion and Facilities**

(i) to engage in, assist in or promote the improvement of facilities and attractions for tourists to the state and the development of the state as a major tourist destination;

(ii)to carry on the business of providing transport facilities for persons visiting tourist attractions in the state;

(iii)to secure domestic and overseas publicity for the tourist attractions in the state and tourism projects outside state in which the state has an interest;

(iv)to co-ordinate the activities of persons providing services for visitors to the State;

(v)to prepare and ensure implementation of master plans for lands declared as tourism areas and/or belonging to the Committee, in conformity with the notified master plan of the region, if any;

(vi) to rate the tourism sites;

(vii)to conceptualise and implement policies and measures for environmental protection;

(viii)to ensure smooth traffic flow in and around Eco tourism areas or special tourism zones in coordination with police department; and

(ix) to coordinate with all connected government agencies in providing external infrastructure to tourism areas or special Eco tourism zones;

(c) **Regulation**

(i) to identify and declare any site having tourism potential duly indicating the boundaries of such land, and maintain a register of such declared tourism sites;

(ii)to regulate service standards and operational procedures to be adopted by such tourism enterprises as may be determined by the Committee;

(iii)to license such class or classes of tourism enterprises as may be determined and to prescribe the conditions under which the licences may be granted and the fees which may be levied for the licences;

(iv)to require any government or non-governmental agency to submit information on programmes and reports in respect of its tourism promotion and marketing activities;

(Contd..8)

(v)to regulate the timings of tourism services;

(vi) to notify rates of fine for littering and / or vandalism and/ or indecent behaviour within tourism sites or special tourism zones;

(vii)to collect fines within Eco tourism sites or special tourism zones;

(viii)to maintain health, hygiene and public decency within and in the vicinity of Eco tourism sites;

(ix) to issue directions and/or regulate entry of certain persons to certain tourism experiences for reasons such as health, age, skill and such other requirements;

(x) to prescribe the standards for avenue plantation and urban design guidelines for access roads to tourism areas or special tourism zones;

(xi)to stipulate, monitor, review and evaluate all standards, operations and activities relating to any tourism matter;

37. Any matter directed to be placed before the Committee may be carried out by circulation amongst such number of members as stipulated in first schedule of the Act, and any resolution so circulated and signed shall be effective and binding as if such resolution has been passed at a meeting of the Committee.

38. Appeal.

(a) Any person aggrieved by an order passed by the Committee in exercise of its powers may, within ninety days from the date of receipt of such order, file an appeal to the APTCH Board, Provided that the Board may entertain an appeal filed after the expiry of ninety days, if it is satisfied that there was sufficient cause preventing the appellant from filing the appeal in time.

(b) Every appeal shall be accompanied by an attested copy of the order appealed against and such fees, as may be prescribed.

(c) The appellant shall have the right to appear either in person or through a counsel or a duly authorized agent, and the Committee against whose order the appeal has been filed, may be represented by such officer, counsel or person as the Committee may authorize.

(d) The Board may after giving the appellant an opportunity of being heard and after making such enquiry as it may deem fit, dispose of the appeal recording the reasons thereof.

(e) Every appeal filed under this rule shall be disposed of as early as may reasonably be practicable, but not later than four months from the date of filing of such appeal.

RAJAT BHARGAVA
SPECIAL CHIEF SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT